

AGAIN A "VANITY FAIR" PLAY

MARIE TEMPEST AS BECKY SHARP AT THE NEW THEATRE.

A Well Staged and for the Most Part Well Acted English Version of the Famous Novel Miss Tempest's Becky Sharp in Being Too Operatic.

Once more has a popular heroine been picked from a classic and transferred to the medium of the stage. "Vanity Fair," made from Thackeray's novel by Cosmo Gordon-Lennox and Robert Hichens, was acted last night at the New Theatre. Just as the other version of the book seen here was made to provide a role for an actress, last night's drama was written for Marie Tempest, who has taken her place on the stage lately equipped by the refined and elevated art of Olga Nethersole.

Miss Tempest acted the play first in London some ten years ago. Then its success was qualified. The fact that it possesses Thackeray's novel as a basis imparts some cachet to the real sense of the word than any collection of episodes designed to throw Becky's character into the foreground over could be. The authors have kept close to the character of Becky in modeling their scenes. The first act ends with the announcement of Becky's marriage to Rawdon Crawley, later she is seen with Steyne and her social progress is indicated by her presence at Gaunt House, where her wit delights the Prince Regent. As the inevitable dramatic interest of these scenes there is Steyne's love for Becky and his determination to win her from Crawley. So her husband is arrested for debt and appeals in vain to his wife for aid. It is when she and Lord Steyne are together at supper in the little house in Curzon street that Crawley surprises them. There the same episode that gave dramatic quality to Mr. Mitchell's play for Mrs. Fiske is the theatre climax of the version seen last night.

But the English authors do not follow the heroine so far in her career. She is deserted by Rawdon, and the audience does not have the opportunity of witnessing the days of her Gorman career. The last scene has the advantage of being the most dramatic moment of the play. There was an undeniable advantage here, for in the secret of Becky's life as the two collaborators have drawn them there is in reality little drama. The theatre pulse is sluggish in movement throughout the many scenes.

Yet like all the New Theatre has offered this year, there are admirable substitutes for thrilling action. There is beauty in every scene of London and Brussels life in the era of the drama. Good taste and imagination are the inspiring sources of every beautiful picture that the slow progress of these episodic scenes reveal. Then some discerning theatrical intelligence directs the numerous players in the long cast to an interpretation of the roles that would satisfy the most exacting standard. The failure last night to correspond to the highest promise was concerned with the players who are perhaps beyond the control of the guiding spirits in the New Theatre.

There are difficulties for the producer of any drama made from such a novel that every stage manager must overcome. He is dealing with portraits more or less familiar to a well read public. It was in realizing these that the direction of the New Theatre probably reached its highest achievement last night. No lover of "Vanity Fair" would quarrel with the stage manager or the actors who last night incorporated Mr. Pitt Crawley, Miss Crawley admirably played by Mrs. Dellenbaugh, Lord Steyne so far as his physical aspect was concerned and other strongly marked but less important characterizations lifted from the pages of the book. Of them and their surroundings there is to be written only the highest praise.

Miss Tempest acted Becky wholly in the spirit of operetta. And Becky was certainly much more of a woman than the symbols of such a trivial conception of the character can ever realize. It was not quite plain what Graham Browne was attempting to do with the part of Rawdon. But of the innate lovable bon garçon in spite of all his faults he indicated no trace. When one remembers Mrs. Fiske and Maurice Barrymore, but remembering is not the business of the reporter of contemporaneous theatre events.

He is but to see and write. So there should be praise for Olive Wyndham's gentle Amelia and for the manly, sincere George Osborne played by William Raymond with a clearness of diction that

especially distinguished him. Albert Brunner gave Steyne no element of distinction, he took the role as a character part and that was all he made of it. Rose Coghlan had scant opportunities as Mrs. O'Dowd. It can scarcely be said that she did much with them.

"Vanity Fair" is a delightful performance. It will interest every lover of the classic because of the respectful attempt to embody the novel in a play. The success with which this has been accomplished is sufficient to satisfy those who might quarrel with the attempt to make a play where little or no material for one exists. But there is more than the mere exploitation of a famous book in the New Theatre's latest production. The feeling and spirit of its period are most fascinatingly realized.

DEATH OF GEORGE WALKER.

With Williams He Was One of the Stars of the Comedy Stage.

George Walker, the negro comedian, for the last sixteen years a member of the team of Williams and Walker, died last night at the State sanitarium at Central Islip, Long Island. He was taken ill last spring while fulfilling an engagement in Brooklyn. He broke down completely in June and went to the sanitarium.

Walker was 38 years old. He was born in Lawrence, Kan. He went from there when a young man to the Pacific coast and joined a theatrical circuit which took in the coast towns. He met Bert Williams there and they came to New York together in 1896. Their first production, "A Gold Bug," given at the Casino, was not a success and they returned to San Francisco.

A year or so later the same play was given in the Hollis Street Theatre in Boston and then they brought it here. When produced at a music hall in Fourteenth street it was well received and they filled an engagement of thirty weeks. It also had a six weeks run in London. Williams and Walker returned to New York in 1899 and after two years with Hyde's Comedians they started in for themselves with the play called "In Dahomey." This was followed by "Sons of Ham" and "A Lode of Coal." Their last production was "In Bandanna Land." Walker is survived by his wife, his mother and his father. The burial will be in Kansas.

YESTERDAY AT THE OPERA.

Humperdinck's "Koenigskinder" Attracted a Very Large Matinee Audience.

Engelbert Humperdinck's "Koenigskinder" was given at the Metropolitan Opera House yesterday afternoon. Every seat was sold and all the standing room was occupied. There was plenty of applause and it was evident that the large audience enjoyed the fairy opera. Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette" had been originally announced, but owing to the illness of Mr. Smirnov the change was necessitated. No one seemed to be deeply grieved.

The performance offered the same features as heretofore. Much more comment might be made about the score of this work, especially about its singular lack of originality. But the composer has brought such charming results out of such poor promises that he must be not only forgiven but even blessed. As for his interpreters, they all command our gratitude, but none quite so much as Gertrude Farrar, whose lovely *Giselle* is a new and enchanting figure in the gallery of operatic portraits.

After the opera there was more dancing by Miss Pavlowa, Mr. Mordkine and other Russians. No opera is now complete without a terpsichorean appendage. Happily the tail does not quite wag the dog, and in itself a beautiful and inspiring member of the menagerie. In the evening "Aida" was sung.

Franklin Day Celebration.

On Tuesday evening, January 17, at 8 o'clock, the birthday of Benjamin Franklin will be celebrated at the Brooklyn Labor Lyceum, 949 Willoughby avenue. A programme of music, song and addresses will be given. The principal address will be made by S. M. White.

Governor-General of Canada Here.

Earl Grey, Governor-General of Canada, arrived at the Plaza, accompanied by Lord Percy of his staff, and his secretary. Lord Percy said that the Governor-General had come to New York to rest up for a few days and that he expects to return to Ottawa next Wednesday.

RECITAL BY MRS. ZEISLER

PROGRAMME OF PIANO MUSIC NOT PLAYED EVERY DAY.

The Wedding March and the Elv's Dance From Liszt's Arrangement of Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream—Chopin, Oldberg, Dvorak and Others.

Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler, pianist, gave a recital at Carnegie Hall yesterday afternoon. This player comes occasionally from Chicago that we may not forget how art flourishes in the city by the great lake. She is always welcome, for she plays music not recited by every other pianist, and much of it too she sets forth in a way quite her own. In these days individuality commands a large measure of public appreciation. It was therefore much to be regretted that more people did not know that Mrs. Zeisler was in town.

Her programme opened with the

wedding march and elv's dance from Liszt's decorative arrangement of Mendelssohn's music to Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream." This is music of a kind which all pianists with well trained fingers should be able to play in a manner pleasing to the average audience. The second number was Weber's "Invitation to the Dance," which is rarely found in the programmes of piano recitals in these days.

Of course the audience burst into applause at the old familiar spot before the return of the introduction, and of course the ushers rushed down the aisles to show people to their seats while the pianist was playing these measures, and thus the charming finale of the composition was spoiled. But it always is, and so that is hardly a matter for tears.

It only serves to remind us that the orchestral arrangement by Felix Weingartner, which covered the break at this point, removed the possibility of a nuisance. It was a pity that anything untoward should occur to mar the effect

of Mrs. Zeisler's performance of the old composition, because she played it with much charm, and if she had omitted the Viennese trick of syncope the accompaniment to the cantilena she would have played it with even more. Chopin's impromptu in F sharp sounded somewhat heavy. The other Chopin numbers were an étude and the first scherzo. Mrs. Zeisler played also a sonata by Oldberg, dedicated to her, and compositions by D'Albert, Schuetz, Dvorak and Rubinstein. Throughout the recital her technical dexterity was in evidence, and also her musicianship. It seems that it is no longer necessary to speak of her as the Sarah Bernhardt of the piano. She is not even the Ugkree. But then Jean Christophe always distrusted lions and panthers of the piano, and we should do the same.

WHERE'S CAVALIERI?

They Think in Paris That He Is Coming Here—Mascagni Puzzle.

Signor G. P. Centenini, manager of the Russian dancers, who has been in Paris visiting his wife, Jane Noria, returned yesterday by the French liner La Savoie

and said that the signora was getting better, but would be unable to do any work for several months. He remained with her until the crisis of her illness had passed.

Signor Centenini said it was the talk of Paris that Mascagni had not kept faith with Liebler & Co. in the preparation of "Yael" and there was a general impression that the composer would not come to America. He is at present superintending the completion of a new villa in Italy.

Paris, the signor said, was puzzled over the disappearance from that city of Lina Cavalieri, wife of Bob Cavalieri, ex-Sheriff of Dutchess county. It did not take stock in a rumor that she was singing in Italy under an assumed name but was inclined to believe that she had kept her threat or promise to come to America and was now on the Atlantic.

Other passengers by the Savoie were Gustave Michaut, professor of literature in the Sorbonne, who will lecture here on the French classics, lyric poets and modern writers, and Jean Dmitrow, the new first secretary of the Russian embassy at Washington, who had charge of the transfer to their homes after the Russo-Japanese war of the wounded and sick soldiers of the Czar.

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